

Mr. BRYANT of Texas. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, let me just say respecting our binational agreements is pretty important. I have been told over and over again in hearings throughout the last decade that the agreement that President Ronald Reagan made with the President of Mexico was not a treaty, and that is absolutely right. Nonetheless, many of us respect agreements made by our Presidents. In fact, I think it is the responsibility of the U.S. Congress, not the State legislature, to see to it that we respect those agreements and live up to them.

The La Paz Agreement, under article 2, said very simply that the Governments of Mexico and the United States were directed to the fullest extent practicable to adopt appropriate measures to prevent, reduce, and eliminate sources of pollution in their respective territory which affect the border area of the other. Article 7 stated that the two governments shall assess as appropriate projects that may have significant impacts on the border area.

I have placed into the RECORD with my motion to revise and extend the objections of the Mexican Government and diplomatic note to the United States. That is not the responsibility of the State of Texas. We are a State that is in this Union. That is the responsibility of this Congress to see to it that we respond in an appropriate fashion.

I can just tell the Members that my colleague from Texas is absolutely right. The United States would not put up with it if it was within 100 kilometers, as the La Paz Agreement states we were to have the dumping of radioactive waste by the Government of Mexico.

Mr. BRYANT of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his additional comments. I would emphasize once again, we are not talking about a simple siting question that makes some people happy and some unhappy. We are talking about a siting question that subjects this country to enormous liabilities.

In 1931, 40 miles from this site, there was an earthquake that registered 6.4 on the Richter scale. Sixty-five years ago is just yesterday in geologic time. In April of this year, just 2 months before this thing was marked up in committee, there was an earthquake in the same region that measured 5.6 on the Richter scale. Can anybody argue that we ought to let States locate nuclear waste dumps in earthquake zones right next to an international boundary and on a river that serves millions of people, who if harmed will be in the courthouse asking the taxpayers of this country to pay for the harm that they suffered? I do not think we can make that argument.

Today the gentleman from Texas [Mr. COLEMAN] and I and the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DOGGETT] and the gentleman from Texas [Mr. BONILLA] stand

on the floor of the House and ask this House of Representatives to make a decision that is in the interest of the American people, and say to the States of Texas, Maine, and Vermont, go back and do it again. We may approve the next one and we may not, but for goodness sakes do not send us one that is in an earthquake zone.

Mr. SCHAEFER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would just say that our colleague, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. FIELDS], should be commended for this efforts to move this bill forward in a very fashionable, responsible, and timely manner.

I would like to thank the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE], the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Energy and Power, for his support in moving this very reasonable measure through the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. FIELDS] to close debate.

Mr. FIELDS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I will be fairly brief.

The purpose of a law passed by Congress is to allow States to make decisions for themselves, to make decisions relative to siting. That decision has been made. It is a decision that has been reviewed by the Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact Commission. It has been reviewed by the Texas Water Commission. The Texas legislature has voted on this. I stand here with a letter from Governor George Bush. It is factual to say that former Governor Ann Richards supported this. I stand here with a letter from Lieutenant Governor Bob Bullock, I stand here with a letter from Mickey LeMater of the M.D. Anderson Cancer Institute talking about the need for Congress to move forward.

Is there a benefit to the State? The answer is absolutely. That if the State of Texas had not itself moved forward, then Texas would have been subject to becoming the dumping ground for the rest of the country. We would not have had the ability or have the ability to pass laws restricting the low-level nuclear waste coming in to our particular State. This is a decision that has been made by Texans for Texans in the best interest of our particular State. I urge all of my colleagues to support this piece of legislation.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY). The gentleman will state it.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, it has been some time since I have done a suspension on the floor and I am unsure how we can assure a record vote. At what time should that request be made?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. We will have that in just a moment.

The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SCHAEFER] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 558.

The question was taken.

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5, rule I, and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCHAEFER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 558, the bill just considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

Mr. COLEMAN. Reserving the right to object, Mr. Speaker, not on that issue but only to make sure that we have in fact ensured that we will have a vote. I thought we needed to ask for the yeas and nays. If that was done in dissimilar fashion, that is fine, but I just was inquiring.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The yeas and nays have not been ordered on that motion. It would be put to a vote tomorrow afternoon at some point.

Mr. COLEMAN. I thank the Speaker, and I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

PERMISSION FOR SUNDRY COMMITTEES AND THEIR SUBCOMMITTEES TO SIT TOMORROW, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1995, DURING THE 5-MINUTE RULE

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the following committees and their subcommittees be permitted to sit tomorrow while the House is meeting in the Committee of the Whole House under the 5-minute rule.

The Committee on Banking and Financial Services; the Committee on Commerce; the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight; the Committee on International Relations; the Committee on the Judiciary; and the Committee on Resources.

It is my understanding that the minority has been consulted and that there is no objection to these requests.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

□ 1815

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, the Democratic leadership has been consulted and we have no objection to these requests.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.